WORLD ORDER

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RELIGION AND CULTURE
Editorial

TRANSITION IN WORLD ECONOMY
Emeric Sala

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL
Garreta Busey

THE WORLD OF TOMORROW
Bertha Hyde Kirkpatrick

EDUCATION FOR CHARACTER
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WORLD ORDER

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RELIGION AND CULTURE

RELIGION has always been one of the most important factors of civilization and culture. Art, especially, has found its chief and most potent inspiration in the spiritual consciousness of humanity. The world's most glorious sculpture, architecture, painting and music have been motivated by the religious impulse.

One reason why religion is a powerful influence in art-expression is because art has a strong emotional foundation—and religion is the most powerful and universal solvent and manipulator of human emotions. Religion has the power of stimulating both individual and mass emotions and of holding them at white heat. It was such a white heat of religious emotion which created the Gothic cathedrals, the most ethereal and lofty of all art productions. These cathedrals were mass movements — the concept and expression of a whole people, not of one artist or one patron only.

Religion not only inspires the creation of more beautiful forms of art, but it also arouses in the masses a more delicate and compelling appreciation for beauty as expressed in art.

Thus religion has a definite place in the development of mass culture. The masses are heavy dough, hard enough to raise. Only the yeast of religion presents an unfailing ferment.

NOT only does religion inspire in the masses a love for art, but it also serves to refine human tastes and desires. The psychological heaviness of the masses can be most quickly and universally alleviated by the stimuli of religion. Thus religion refines man's capacity for art appreciation by giving him greater sensitivity.

Religion is the only force great enough in its attractive power to counteract the morbid and degenerate power of sex appeal in art. In general, art tends to vibrate between these two poles. It tends to receive its chief inspirations either from spiritual or from sensual concepts and motivations. Especially is this true of art which attempts a universal mass appeal. For religion and sex are the only motivations that can be guaranteed universality in their appeal.

Hence an age inclined to irreligion is an age inclined also to sensuality. This has proved true throughout all history, and will prove true for future

ages without end. It follows, from what has been stated, that the only cure for an age of sensuality is a powerful spiritual revival.

The early Christians came upon such an era—when sensuality was the predominant motivation in human activities, including art expression. The pagan art was so vitiated by this taint of sensuality that the Christians, when they came into power, found no remedy other than complete aversion to all forms of pagan art. This extreme reaction swept away much that was innocently beautiful in pagan art. But it was a harsh remedy that succeeded in completely purifying the motivation of art—so that when under the distinctive Christian culture art began to rise again, it was an art exquisitely pure and spiritual.

Music, painting, sculpture, architecture, illuminated manuscripts, stained glass, all forms of art expression of the middle ages—preceding the voluptuous ripeness of the unspiritual Renaissance — were art expressions of the greatest delicacy, purity, and spiritual beauty. The only comparable period of art expression in history is the period of Buddhist art in China and Japan — an art which flowered under similar spiritual auspices.

AGAIN, today, we live in a period of irreligion. And again, as in past ages, sensuality tends to warp and tarnish all forms of art expression. This tendency is all the more pronounced today because of the universality of the instruments of culture such as the magazine, the moving pictures and the radio.

Censorship is a poor instrumentality for refining art. It is but a negative influence, at best, denying access to the public of art already conceived and executed.

What is needed for the refinement of art today, and through art, for the refinement of the people, is the stimulus and inspiration of a more potent spiritual consciousness and a universally expressed appreciation for the purely beautiful in all art forms. Religion, apart from its institutionalization, has a still more important part. There needs to be a spiritual awakening, a revival of the religious conscience and consciousness, a general and universal refinement, through spiritualization, of man's emotional and desire nature.

The New World Order of Bahá'u'lláh stands for just this. It promotes not only justice and moral integrity in world affairs, but also a greater refinement of that beauty-loving impulse which is the common heritage of humanity.

The Bahá'í Cause — unlike Christianity which drew its motivations too closely from the severe psychology of Hebrew Culture — will not destroy but will refine contemporaneous art. Thus the New World Order will happily combine the highest expressiveness of the Greek love of beauty with the earnest moral dedications of the Hebrew spirit.

We stand, I believe, at the dawn not only of a great spiritual epoch, but of an epoch which will create a beauty and a power of art forms surpassing in delicacy and potency anything the world has known.

S. C.

TRANSITION IN WORLD ECONOMY

EMERIC SALA

THE process of earning our living is the story of economics. It can be written in two chapters. We all eat, whether black or white, rich or poor. The supplying of food is a function of economics. We all wear clothes, and live in houses. These, too, have to be produced by human labor. But we do not produce all the food we eat, nor make all the clothes we wear, or build the houses we live in. Others do it. And that is where Chapter Two of our story begins.

To eat the food our neighbor produces, we have to give him, in return, something we have made and which he can use. This exchange we call barter, or buying and selling, or international trade, made possible through division of labor. It is also called distribution, or the trading of all those values which man produces and needs.

It is natural for men to trade. The effort to satisfy our desires, and of those we love, with the least exertion, is the motive of trade. Without trade we would still be in the jungle (careless as monkeys). History shows that where trade could best be carried on, wealth accumulated, and civilization had its beginning. We find that near frequented harbors, navigable rivers, and much traveled highways, cities arose, and the arts and sciences developed.

In the medieval period, the town with its surrounding manors was the characteristic economic unit. Although these towns and manors were politically subordinated to the state, and its king, the state did not unify national economic affairs. Each town, with its surrounding manors, was largely self-supporting, and was separated from other towns by trade-barriers. It was only in the mercantile period, from the fourteenth to the end of the eighteenth century, that the national economic unit took shape.

The transition from town economy to national economy was accelerated through the growth of inter-town trade, and the rivalries of various trading organizations. The national economic state was characterized by conceptions of national trade, national division of labor, national taxation, and national banking.

THE POWER ERA

The nineteenth century stands apart through the introduction of the steam-engine and electric power. Manufacturers could produce in large quantities at lower prices. Markets were extended. Capital accumulated through international trade faster than ever before. It is interesting to note that

the people of England and Scotland were the first western communities to augment their wealth by losing their national self-sufficiency when they started to trade with other countries. In 1700, the United Kingdom imported one million pounds of raw cotton. In 1900, she imported fifteen hundred million pounds. International trade developed at an accelerating tempo, and has molded the foreign policies of the great nations ever since. Between 1875 and 1913, world trade had more than trebled, reaching a figure of about forty-two billion dollars. "The transition," writes Walter Lippmann, "from the relative self-sufficiency of individuals in local communities to their interdependence in a world-wide economy is the most revolutionary experience in recorded history. . . . If we are to find our way through the practical difficulties of our time, we must go back to the first principle of its economy, namely, that its determining characteristic is the increase of wealth by a mode of production which destroys the self-sufficiency of nations, localities, and individuals, making them deeply and intricately interdependent."

The adaptation of different parts of the earth's surface to the production of the different things man needs, prove that our Creator has not intended man to depend for the supply of his needs only upon his own production, but rather on its exchange with his fellowmen. That this exchange should not be limited to the members of one tribe, or the citizens of one country, is evidenced by the fact that only through international trade could capital accumulate, modern civilization develop, and our general level of prosperity be increased.

Canada, the fifth largest trading nation in the world's markets, could serve us as an example. Its standard of living is one of the highest amongst nations. Next to the U.S.A., it has the largest number of motor cars. Suppose it cuts off its trade with the rest of the world. By closing its frontiers to all imports and exports, it intends to become a self-supporting nation. What would happen? Within a few weeks, the exhausted supply of tea and coffee could not be replenished. Cigarettes from Virginia and other markets would have to be sacrificed. No more oranges, bananas, and raisins. Without rubber, tires could not be made. Canadians would be unable to run their cars. Cotton and silk mills would have to close down. Many tens of thousands would be thrown out of work. Railways would cease to operate with the withdrawal of all export freight of wheat, pulp and minerals. No farmer could pay for the manufactured goods of the cities. The city-dwellers would starve, unless they returned to the land for a primitive existence. Within a generation, the standard of living in Canada would be reduced to the level of the first pioneers in the 17th Century. If Canada, and the other countries of the world want to maintain, and even increase their standard of living, they must surrender their tendency for self-sufficiency through increase of protective tariffs, and the policy "My country first," and exchange their independence for that interdependence which comes with foreign trade.

N. Kawashima, former member of

the League of Nations Economic Committee, and lecturer at the University of Tokyo, writes; "From my long experience in dealing with the problems of international commerce, it is my firm conviction that economic prosperity and advancement of the Foreign trade of each and every country are inseparably co-related. One single country cannot prosper at the expense of others."

ECONOMIC NATIONALISM

And yet, we still find that the general public subscribes to the fallacy that between countries, it is good business to sell but bad business to buy. In the name of economic nationalism and economic self-sufficiency, we have been taught that all foreign trade is bad, and that a nation can most effectively promote its welfare by producing within its frontiers everything it needs, regardless of cost and sacrifice in our living standard. Tariffs have been raised under various pretexts:—Tariffs for revenue; to improve methods of production; to prevent unemployment; to foster industries for national defense.

In perusing the history of tariffs and trade barriers, we find that the determining motive is self-interest of minority groups, and short-sightedness of statesmen. We find an amusing illustration in Woodward's "A New American History": "In 1787, the legislature of New York came to the conclusion that too much money was going from New York City into the pockets of Yankees and Jerseymen. Connecticut supplied most of the firewood used in the city, and the farmers of New Jersey sent boatloads of vegetables, chickens and eggs across the river. New York enacted a tariff law, and slapped a heavy duty on these humble products. Every chicken peddler from across the river had to take his fowls to the customhouse, have them valued, and obtain clearance papers. Eggs were counted and taxed, stocks of firewood were measured, and the values of cabbages were appraised. Duties had to be paid on everything. New Jersey rose in wrath. The city of New York owned a lighthouse on Sandy Hook. The New Jersey legislature levied a tax of $1,800.00 a year on it. In Connecticut, the merchants decided to boycott New York. They formed an association and bound themselves, under penalties, not to buy or sell in the city."

As early as 1913, President Woodrow Wilson wrote: "A comparatively small number of men control the raw material, the waterpower, and the railroads of this country. And that same group of men control prices and the larger credits of the country. . . . The masters of the Government are the combined capitalists and manufacturers of the United States." We, therefore, can understand that in tariff making, the interest of the greatest number is likely to be a lost cause, and the harmful effects of tariffs upon foreign countries is given little or no consideration. We can safely say that our present tariff system in the world has no organic relationship to general policy, whether national or international. The economy of totalitarian countries rests upon a war basis, rather than a sound economic basis. National economic isolation requires

complete control of production and prices. They achieve less production for consumption, although their armament programs absorb the unemployed. The peoples' standard of living becomes inevitably lessened. Such a policy leads to political tension, international insecurity, and increasing danger of war.

DECREASE IN WORLD TRADE

As we have shown before, within forty years prior to the World War, international trade had more than trebled. Between 1914 and 1938, world trade should have continued to increase, due to increase in population, new inventions, improved methods of production and transportation, additional gold supply, and the normal growth of human desire for a better living. Instead, world trade has decreased about 50%. The World Economic Conference of 1927 was composed of about 200 experts, representing fifty governments, and they agreed unanimously that our tariff policies are the chief impediment to the growth of the world's prosperity. High tariffs have reduced mankind's standard of living. High tariffs and other import restrictions were, according to Cordell Hull, U. S. Secretary of State, "largely responsible for the catastrophic decline in the volume of international commerce, and for the diversion of much of what remained away from natural or normal channels. They caused immense surpluses to be dammed up, created distressing shortages of essential commodities in many countries. They were thus instrumental in the disorganization of prices, employment, profits—in short, in the creation of the whole gamut of the disruption and destruction which were so characteristic of the depression."

Our story thus comes to the following conclusion: the trouble does not lie with production, but with distribution. The economic life of every civilized country is based on world trade. The productive machinery created through the combined efforts of men's ingenuity rests on international commerce. The trend of our prosperity is closely linked with the trend of world trade. Restriction of the flow of the world's products, curtails our income, ferments unrest, generates tension, and breeds war. Removal of the barriers for the unhampered and natural growth of world trade brings in its wake widespread prosperity, friendly relations, and undisturbed peace. But this is a dream, which remains unrealized, as long as we love only our country, to the exclusion of our neighbors.

The prosperity of each nation depends on the prosperity of the world. Therefore, statesmen, economists, and financiers, who have a decisive influence in the shaping of world commerce, should be motivated by a loyalty, which transcends the interests of a group, a country, or an empire. The other day, I was reading a book by a very well known economist. He was a member of the Supreme Economic Council of the League of Nations. He was a delegate at the World Economic Conference. He is an authority on credit and finance, world trade and war debts, tariffs and government control. He gives a lucid description of the causes of the world depression.

He admits that "man's activities in every sphere react upon one another more rapidly, more directly, and more intimately than in any previous age." He is proposing a World Economic Council, a world monetary system, and a Central Bank. Reading through his book, however, I find that his point of view represents, primarily, the interests of his country, and his motive to save the world from catastrophe is to save his empire.

The world, to emerge out of the catastrophe it is facing, needs men who have the vision that "The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens," and who have attained the conviction, "That one is indeed a man who today dedicateth himself to the service of the entire human race." These are the words of Bahá'u'lláh, who was not an economist, nor a statesman. But His is the spirit which can, and which did, inspire men to work for the world.

THE FIRST IS RELIGION

President Roosevelt, addressing Congress, names the three basic institutions underlying American civilization: "The first is religion. It is the source of the other two—democracy and international good faith." He recognizes religion as the greatest force for good. Today, it is not very discernible, when we review the world's scene. But that is no proof that, in the past, it was not one of the greatest forces molding human destiny. Our literature, our art and our music can trace their origin to religion. It inspired men to heroic and selfless deeds. It inculcated in man's slowly awakening soul a conscious relationship with his Creator. It gave man a stature and a dignity, aspiring and hoping to know and to comprehend the Unknown, and the Incomprehensible. Religion gave us also a moral code. As individuals, we are usually friendly, hospitable, and kind. The average Christian or Jew would not lie, or steal, or kill another man. The reiteration of the teachings of Moses and Jesus Christ, for so many thousands of years, left an indelible mark on our behavior towards each other. Religion did more than that. At its best, it unified men. A common faith brought men together. Under the name of Zoroaster, or Moses, or Christ, or Muhammad, or of any other of the founders of the great religions, we find men united — in a greater measure of contentment, in a larger number, and for a longer period of time, than under the standard of Alexander the Great, or Napoleon, or Lincoln, or of any other man.

In this century economic interdependence is world-wide. World cooperation is essential for the survival of our civilization. And if, in the past, religion was most influential in bringing men together, humanity in its greatest need may witness the emergence of a universal and all-inclusive spiritual conception, with a sufficient power to turn the present momentum of a rampant and selfish nationalism into a world federal system, "in which all economic barriers will have been permanently demolished" and "in whose favor all the nations of the world will have willingly ceded every claim to make war."

But how may religion unite the

world, if within its own ranks it is divided into seven apparently irreconcilable groups, and these are again subdivided into hundreds of smaller and often antagonistic units? Is it any wonder that the thinking people of the world long ago forsook the belief that religion could play a leading role in the reorientation of a world society? Is it not true that even our most powerful ecclesiastical organization, claiming the largest number of adherents, is in a process of decomposition since the sixteenth century?

"With respect to religion," writes a Canadian clergyman, "we have reached the end of one era and the beginning of another." We may conceive the religion of the new era in terms of our needs of today. In spirit, we may recognize it as of old; in form and expression, it will be different. If religion is to be revivified, as it has been in the past, every thousand years or so, it will vindicate itself only if and to what extent it can unite a sorely divided humanity of the twentieth century. Religion, with such a scope, justifies its existence. Without the vision of a united world, it is doomed to perdition. If it is true that world-interdependence and world cooperation are essential for our economic life, this must also be true of our political and spiritual life. In the light of such a dire need, how challenging is the claim of the Bahá'í Revelation.

"The Faith of Bahá'u'lláh," writes Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of this faith, "has assimilated, by virtue of its creative, its regulative and ennobling energies, the varied races, nationalities, creeds and classes that have sought its shadow, and have pledged unswerving fealty to its cause. It has changed the hearts of its adherents, burned away their prejudices, stilled their passions, exalted their conceptions, ennobled their motives, coordinated their efforts, and transformed their outlook. While preserving their patriotism and safeguarding their lesser loyalties, it has made them lovers of mankind, and the determined upholders of its best and truest interests. While maintaining intact their belief in the Divine origin of their respective religions, it has enabled them to visualize the underlying purpose of these religions, to discover their merits, to recognize their sequence, their interdependence, their wholeness and unity, and to acknowledge the bond that vitally links them to itself. This universal, this transcending love which the followers of the Bahá'í Faith feel for their fellowmen, of whatever race, creed, class or nation, is neither mysterious nor can it be said to have been artificially stimulated. It is both spontaneous and genuine.

"Such a faith knows no division of class or of party. It subordinates, without hesitation, or equivocation, every particularistic interest, be it personal, regional or national, to the paramount interests of humanity, firmly convinced that in a world of inter-dependent peoples and nations the advantage of the part is best to be reached by the advantage of the whole, and that no abiding benefit can be conferred upon the component parts if the general interests of the entity itself are ignored or neglected."

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

GARRETA BUSEY

"THE universe," said 'Abdu'l-Bahá, "has no imperfections. . . . ." and how, indeed could a perfect God have created it otherwise? Yet when we look around us we see evil and suffering everywhere. Tales of theft, cruelty, violence, and deceit fill every newspaper. Children are made to suffer who have done no wrong. They grow up under conditions which can lead only to crime. Can a God who is both good and omnipotent permit evil to exist?

This is a problem which has troubled the minds and hearts of men since the days of Job. Some thinkers would solve it by denying the existence of God, others by denying the existence of evil. But human wickedness and suffering cannot be ignored, and if we are to believe that God exists and that man is significant in His creation, we are forced to one of three conclusions: either He is not concerned with good and evil, or He does not have full control of the universe, or that which we call evil is not what it appears.

Religion has always contained an apparent contradiction. It has always emphasized, on the one hand, the goodness of an Almighty God and the importance to Him of man, and, on the other, the necessity to combat some force, which we call evil and which is somehow bound up with suffering. The Buddha taught that suffering is the result of attachment to things of the earth. The conquest of evil is the conquest of personal desire. Zoroaster represented evil as angels of darkness in constant struggle with angels of light. Man must choose on which side he will fight, and once he has chosen, he is committed to an unrelenting conflict. This principle of free choice is also part of the traditional Hebrew and Christian theologies. God did not create evil; neither did He create a mechanically good universe. He allowed man and the angels to obey Him freely, of their own will. There was no evil until Satan chose rebellion against God and tempted man. Satan, or Shaitan appears in the Islamic teachings, also, as a spirit unconverted by the Word of God, seeking to win men away from His Kingdom.

SELF THE EVIL

The Bahá'í teachings make it clear that these great figures of darkness are symbols. They are the self. They are the baser desires of man's nature, the obstacles which prevent us from turning to God.

But why should they exist? Why should we have to struggle so desperately against evil, in a universe

created by a merciful God? And why should men suffer who have done no wrong? Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá were both victims of cruel and fanatical persecution for over forty years. How can they say that the universe has no imperfection?

We look upon evil with a limited vision: they saw it in the perspective of eternity. We are like Job, crying out to God in his perplexity to whom the Lord answered out of the whirlwind: "Who is *this* that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? . . . Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"

When we see the innocent made to suffer, we exclaim, "There is no justice in the world!" but when Bahá'u'lláh looked upon those devoted followers who went with Him into exile and prison, though He mourned for their distress, yet He proclaimed, in the most powerful terms, the mercy of God, His justice, and the perfection of His creation.

WORLD OF POSSIBILITY

'Abdu'l-Bahá gives us a clue to the solution of this problem when He speaks of "the world of possibility—that is the world of existence." The universe is developing towards perfection: a flawless Vision, stripped of the limitations of time, sees that perfection as already accomplished, much as a man, planting an acorn, knowing the conditions of soil and climate which surround it, sees in it the full-grown tree.

But our vision is not flawless. The world may be potentially perfect, but this present evil, which we see all about us, is something which, as finite beings, we cannot ignore. We must know how to regard it in its relation to our own lives and the practical affairs of men.

'Abdu'l-Bahá tells us that evil is negative. It is the lack of some positive quality. Nothing is evil in itself, though it may be so in its relationship to some other part of creation. The poison of a snake is good in relation to the snake. The desire to satisfy our senses is necessary and good, if we are to carry on life; only when it is turned to a purpose for which it was not designed does it become evil. Anger is good when it is directed against oppression. Pain and suffering are benignant, because they teach us to avoid that which may destroy us. Even the self, the Satan which religious teaching urges us so forcefully to subdue, is in its highest development, the glory of creation.

If this explanation is to satisfy us, we must remember that behind it, (indeed, behind all the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith) is the conception of a varied and evolving universe. Growth itself is one of the elements of the world's perfection. There are many conditions of existence in the physical world, ranging all the way from mineral to man. In nature, matter passes back and forth from one of these states to another—from mineral to vegetable, from vegetable to ani-

mal—obeying physical law. The highest development of matter is man: as Hamlet describes him, "What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving, how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals!" As 'Abdu'l-Bahá says, "When we speak of man, we mean the perfect one, the foremost individual in the world, who is the sum of spiritual and apparent perfections, and who is like the sun among the beings."

Nowhere in all creation until we come to man do we find the ability to perceive moral and spiritual values, the gift of entering, if only a little way, into that higher kingdom, the kingdom of the spirit. This capacity man realizes to its fullest extent when he follows the teachings of the Manifestations of God, "Who stand on the mount of vision and foreshadow the perfections of an evolving humanity."

Evil, then in the light of these teachings, is insufficient growth. The brutal man is he who lags in his development. The qualities he possesses are more appropriate to the beast. Indeed, 'Abdu'l-Bahá says, he is worse than the beast, for he has been endowed with intellect and is, therefore, more potent in his brutality. The selfish man has not yet learned that fundamental spiritual law that to find one's self, one must sacrifice it. The chauvinist is ignorant of the law of the unity of mankind. He does not know that an injury to one portion of humanity is an injury to all, even himself.

Suffering is the discipline by which we learn these things. If we run counter to a physical law and touch a red-hot stove, we feel pain. If we run counter to a spiritual law, the result is more subtle but nonetheless sure. I may injure my neighbor and feel no pain. I may even gain materially from my action. But I have deprived myself of the capacity to experience the good pleasure of God, which, once we have known it, we cannot do without. The happiness I have missed is incalculably greater than that which I have gained. What is more, I have added to the sum of resentment and ill-feeling among men. An evil action is not confined to those whom it most directly concerns. Its influence runs through the whole fabric of society and is felt, sooner or later, by all mankind.

DIVINE JUSTICE

Suffering which is the inevitable consequence of our mistakes we can understand and accept. But what justice is there in the great misery we see inflicted on the innocent? What consolation is it to a good man to know that his sufferings are the natural result of the interdependence of men, and that the author of his troubles, some distant person whom he has never seen, has deprived himself of the bounties of God. The only answer to this is belief in the reality of God's nearness and His promises of immortality. The followers of Bahá'u'lláh, more than seventy in number, went with Him joyfully into the most degraded of Turkish prisons. 'Abdu'l-Bahá was most of His life a prisoner and an exile, and yet, in answer to the commiseration

of an interviewer, He only laughed and said that He had been happy there, because He had been in the presence of God. If an evil act has infinite consequences, so too does such willing and joyous acceptance of suffering. We cannot think of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's very apparent happiness in that life of deprivation and hardship without an answering lift of our own hearts. It lightens our own suffering and makes us know how independent we may be of it. He suffered, as it were, vicariously, for us. So, too, we may suffer for others. Vicarious suffering is a positive good which we may do for the world. The very radiance of our aquiescence will lift the hearts of others.

But what, you may ask, of the suffering of little children too young to understand? Here we can only rely on the assurance of all the Prophets that this life is only the beginning of our existence. 'Abdu'l-Bahá has said that for the suffering of the innocent there will be such recompense in another world that that suffering may be considered "the greatest mercy of God. Verily that mercy of the Lord is far better and preferable to all the comfort of this world and the growth and development of this place of mortality."

Evil and pain, then, are the disorders which attend our transition from one plane of consciousness to another and higher one. Many of these disorders will be eradicated as we progress, but not all. We are not pure spirit, and in this life there will always be a measure of suffering. But we can learn to transcend it, as did the followers of Bahá'u'lláh at Akká, and to forget all else in the consciousness of God's love.

O friends! Be not careless of the virtues with which ye have been endowed, neither be neglectful of your high destiny. . . . Ye are the stars of the heaven of understanding, the breeze that stirreth at the break of day, the soft-flowing waters upon which must depend the very life of all men, the letters inscribed upon His sacred scroll. . . . O people of Bahá! Ye are the breezes of spring that are wafted over the world. Through you We have adorned the world of being with the ornament of the knowledge of the Most Merciful. Through you the countenance of the world hath been wreathed in smiles, and the brightness of His light shone forth. Cling ye to the Cord of steadfastness, in such wise that all vain imaginings may utterly vanish.—BAHÁ'U'LLÁH.

THE WORLD OF TOMORROW

BERTHA HYDE KIRKPATRICK

Is it simply wishful dreaming to look beyond the present chaos to a world of peace, actual peace? Bahá'ís are sometimes accused of this,—of being mere idealists with a beautiful plan that can never be realized in this world; at least, not for thousands of years. To be counted among the idealists Bahá'ís are quite willing, but they do not consent to being *mere* idealists. For they are making every effort to realize their ideals. For at least twenty-five centuries (ever since Isaiah gave the promise of the time when "nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more," and Micah promised that "they shall sit every man under his own vine and fig tree, and none shall make them afraid") the ideal of world peace and universal justice has been a dream of prophets and poets and little else. But with the coming of Bahá'u'lláh came a great change—a change both in the outer physical world and in the inner reality, in the heart of man. For Bahá'u'lláh proclaimed that humanity is at the dawn of the day of realization of the dream.

In the outer world it is inventions that give swift communication and rapid transportation bringing distant peoples together and making countries interdependent which are evidences of this change. In the world of the heart it is peace societies, interreligious organizations, racial amity groups, world friendship societies and similar groups that show the change. These are some of the signs that the days of dreaming are ended and that we are now entering the day of accomplishment. But there is something more. Bahá'u'lláh tells us that the goal of world peace *is* attainable in the comparatively near future. He also has unfolded the *plan.* As an enduring basis for world peace He states that two things are necessary—a World State and a World Religion each dependent upon the other and woven into one fabric.

A WORLD STATE

A World State is seen by many of the world's most scholarly and far-seeing statesmen as inevitable in the natural evolution of human affairs. Indeed nearly a hundred and fifty years ago Immanuel Kant reasoned most logically that the next step in the development of government after the establishment of the democratic nation was the World State, democratically organized. "Eternal peace" was, in his mind, the "manifest destiny" of mankind. And it is quite possible that a World State can be organized upon a purely rational and political basis. There are not a few

statesmen in the world now who see clearly the mistakes of the League of Nations and would correct them. Within the last few years a World Foundation has been formed by leading internationally minded men whose aim is "the intelligent organization of life on this planet." By educational processes they aim to develop in people the consciousness of the "inherent unity of mankind." They thus state their aim: "By accustoming people's minds to the observation of events from the point of view of the world as a whole, they hope to bring about a gradual realization of the existence of the world community on the part of thousands and, later on, of millions of people who do not sufficiently realize it."[1] But does even so courageous and noble an aim as this go deeply enough into the causes of present-day world anarchy?

The followers of Bahá'u'lláh go farther than any other organization which is devoted to world unity or world peace. It is that the World State and World Religion must go hand in hand. Education they do believe in, but it must be not only of the mind but of the heart. The tremendous spiritual force which we are accustomed to call religion has always shown itself to be the great revitalizing force which has swept humanity onward in its progress in the path of organization and civilization. The mission of Bahá'u'lláh, the Messenger of God for this day, has already been shown to be to revitalize religion, to quicken the hearts of men. This has ever been the mission of God's Messengers. They radiate the creative force of love. They educate humanity by recreating the heart. As Dr. Esslemont puts it, "by no political alchemy is it possible to make a golden society out of leaden individuals. Bahá'u'lláh, like all previous prophets, proclaimed this truth and taught that in order to establish the Kingdom of God in the world, it must first be established in the hearts of men."[2] Bahá'u'lláh not only renews religion but shows the fundamental oneness of all revealed religions and proclaims the one universal religion which is necessary to make world peace binding and lasting.

A WORLD RELIGION

Who among the statesmen put a world religion along with the world state? Indeed, reasoning from history our statesmen would argue that any attempt at making a world state interwoven with religion was doomed from the beginning to failure. They would point to the long and ruinous struggle for supremacy between church and state during the Middle Ages and to the rapid decadence of the Islamic hierarchy. It is true that a corrupt and decadent religion is not only stultifying but the cause of most cruel deeds and evil plottings. On the other hand the pure religion of God has always been the source of progress and means of building civilization. It is the source of ethics and morality. "Religion is a mighty bulwark," says 'Abdu'l-Bahá, "If the edifice of religion shakes and totters, commotion and chaos will ensue and the order of things will be upset."[3] What greater evidence of the truth of these words than the present condi-

1—Salvadore de Madariaga in Springfield Weekly Republican, Dec. 24, 1936.

2—Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era, J. E. Esslemont, p. 90.

3—Bahá'í Scriptures, p. 415.

tion of the world?

We do not overlook the fact that there are many religionists and other discerning persons who are well aware that mankind is in need of renewed religion, that a great spiritual revival is necessary to save the world. But Christians cannot imagine that any but Christianity should be the world religion and Muhammadans declare that it is the acceptance of their religion by all which is destined to bring world peace. Who shall decide? By what power can all these good aims be brought together under one *plan?* Bahá'u'lláh reminds us that the power of man is limited but that Divine Power is boundless. "By the power of the Holy Spirit alone is man able to progress, for the power of man is limited and the Divine Power is boundless."[4] Through the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh all these aims for a better world are brought together into one plan and through Him Divine Power is made available.

ONENESS OF MANKIND

Bahá'u'lláh's great theme is the "Oneness of Mankind" and enfolded within this theme lie both the practical, logical plan for the World State and the spiritual force to accomplish it. We need to understand this fundamental theme of Bahá'u'lláh's Message to realize how inseparably government and true religion are linked together in the future world and what a firm foundation this makes for true civilization. We need also to understand some details of the plan and what is being done about it—how God through human instruments is gradually building up His plan. "It is this building process," writes Shoghi Effendi, "slow and unobtrusive, to which the life of the world-wide Bahá'í Community is wholly consecrated, that constitutes the one hope of a stricken society. For this process is actuated by the generating influence of God's changeless purpose, and is evolving within the framework of the Administrative Order of His Faith."[5]

This slow "building process" is going on all over the world for the Message of Bahá'u'lláh has already taken root in forty countries and in every continent. This means that the foundation of Bahá'u'lláh's Administrative Order is laid in these forty countries. If you would understand better what is taking place consider carefully the steps of building which Shoghi Effendi enumerates. "The Faith of Bahá'u'lláh," he says, "has changed the hearts of its adherents, burned away their prejudices, stilled their passions, exalted their motives, coordinated their efforts, and transformed their outlook."[6] These changes literally take place. You will find among Bahá'ís people of every race, nation, class and creed, free from limiting prejudice, working together to build a new world under a higher law than they have known before, the law of the "Oneness of Mankind." The assurance of the coming world of peace has truly transformed their outlook and ennobled their motives.

The "coordination of effort" must be taken literally too. It starts in local Bahá'í communities that are organized as soon as there are nine believers in any one place. (This word

4—Wisdom of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 152.

5—World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 195.

6—Idem, p. 197.

community does not mean that Bahá'ís separate themselves or live a communal life.) In these communities is developing the unit of government for the reorganized world of the future. This government is centered in a group of nine men and women and will later be known as the House of Justice which must be responsible for organizing and administering the affairs in such a way that every individual will have equal opportunities and no one will be in need. The members of the House of Justice must be chosen solely for their qualifications. They must possess "unquestioned loyalty, selfless devotion, well-trained minds, recognized ability and mature experience." Party politics is eliminated. Voting is a sacred privilege performed after prayer for guidance. All over the world believers in Bahá'u'lláh are being trained in these higher methods of government. Bahá'u'lláh's plan makes practical application of pure religion to government and life. By observing these methods which are already being used among Bahá'ís one gets a better idea of the meaning of these words of Shoghi Effendi: "Bahá'u'lláh has not only imbued mankind with a new and generating spirit, He clearly and specifically laid down a set of laws, established definite institutions, and provided for the essentials of a Divine Economy. These are destined to be a pattern for future society, a supreme instrument for the establishment of the Most Great Peace and the one agency for the unification of the world."[7]

Let us get a little more of a picture of the future community. The local House of Justice appoints such officials and commissions as are necessary to assist them in carrying on the government. Taxes are graduated according to both the income and necessary outgo of the individual or family. In a rural community if an individual has been unfortunate from crop failure or other reason so that he does not have enough to meet the needs of his family he will be supplied with the necessary funds from the public treasury. On the other hand excess income of a man is taxed in increasing proportion to its excess in a way similar to present income taxation. Besides income taxes public revenue is secured from mines, hidden treasure, voluntary gifts, inheritance taxes and a few other sources. Public expenditures are for health, schools, care of orphans, of aged, sick and infirm and general government needs.

THE FUTURE COMMUNITY

Schools are most important and the training of the child is carefully undertaken. His innate abilities are considered and he is fitted to earn his living in the trade or profession to which he is best adapted. He is taught his own language and one other, a universal language which every one all over the world is taught. Thus information is easily disseminated from one part of the world to another. Communication by radio, for example, has no handicap. But most important in education is the fact that religion and the knowledge of the one God and obedience to His commands are taught in the school as a necessary part of the child's education and the basis for right behavior. Since

7—Idem, p. 19.

there is one universal religion there is no quarrel between sects and denominations as to what particular doctrines and creeds should be taught. The love and reverence of God and the service of humanity are taught to be the highest aims of life. Since all mankind is one, racial, class, national and religious prejudices which at present are drilled into the child from babyhood and which are so destructive to right living, are avoided. In fact, correct education is made the basis of continuing the future world order on its high plane.

THE HOUSE OF WORSHIP

Somewhere near the center of this future community is the House of Worship, nine-sided and beautiful in design, standing in a large garden in which are fountains, trees and flowers. This building is used for worship only and here prayers are offered morning and evening. Around this House of Worship are buildings for humanitarian purposes, a school or university for higher learning in arts and sciences, a hospice for travelers, a hospital and homes for orphans and the aged and infirm. Nearby are erected buildings for concerts, entertainment and various social gatherings. This whole group of buildings is most significant for the very arrangement symbolizes that religion in the new world order must be translated into deeds. We must praise and worship God not only in the House of Worship but in good deeds which insure the best possible opportunities for every individual. Both worship and good deeds are necessary for a complete life. Bahá'u'lláh has also revealed that work itself is worship when done in the spirit of service and to the best of one's abilities.

In the cities government is based on the same model as for the rural communities, but industry takes the place of agriculture. Perhaps our extremely large cities will be spread out into a series of smaller cities so that all who wish can enjoy their "own vine and fig tree." Industrial strife is ended by a plan for profit sharing. Since everyone is enjoined to have a trade or profession there is employment for all with "no idle rich and no idle poor," although some have more property than others. The graduated income tax, the inheritance tax and voluntary sharing prevent vast oversized fortunes from accumulating. There is no liquor or prohibition problem for Bahá'u'lláh has forbidden completely the use of alcoholic beverages.

THE HOME

In this world of the future the home assumes an important place. In the Bahá'í law marriage once more becomes a sacred institution although divorce is allowed under certain conditions. After the two have chosen each other then the consent of all four parents must be obtained. Bahá'u'láh says, "As we desired to bring about love and friendship and the unity of the people, therefore we made it (marriage) conditional upon the consent of the parents also." Happy homes are the rule where contented and well-trained children are reared. Indeed, as the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh gradually evolves hap-

piness in its deepest sense increases. Bahá'u'lláh has told us that we have no idea to what extent man can develop when once he follows the laws of God. New inventions and discoveries in science and industry will by no means cease with man's spiritual development. But there will be this difference, that all these inventions will be used for the good of mankind and not for destruction of life or lowering of morals. Bahá'u'lláh tells us that science and religion are two wings by which man advances.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

But what of international affairs? The changes here are even more important than those in local life, for it is the International House of Justice representing all the nations of the world which with its legislative and executive departments keeps the world running in an orderly and peaceful manner. A world coinage and monetary system is established. World trade is organized and trade barriers broken down so that raw materials and finished products are distributed where needed. National boundaries are carefully and justly fixed to the satisfaction of nations concerned. An international court with power to enforce its decisions settles disputes between nations. But since with a universal language people come to really understand each other and since there are no trade barriers disputes over boundaries and other questions gradually cease. Swift world intercommunication is carefully organized. At last humanity comes of age, sees the folly of war and has abundant means for those things which benefit mankind.

And with this maturity man learns better ways of governing and reaching decisions. He learns to bring out truth and right decisions through consultation and the use of that most potent force, prayer, rather than through debate and party competition. Individual leadership drops away, the group decides and all accept the decision and act as a unit. In groups all over the world men and women are learning and practising these methods now with the firm assurance that eventually they will be universally used. A paragraph from Shoghi Effendi's masterful pen points out in a few forceful words the goal towards which the followers of Bahá'u'lláh are working and how in the future world government and religion go hand-in-hand:

"A world federal system, ruling the whole earth and exercising unchallengeable authority over its unimaginably vast resources, blending and embodying the ideals of both the East and West, liberated from the curse of war and its miseries, and bent on the exploitation of all the available sources of energy on the surface of the planet, a system in which Force is made the servant of Justice, whose life is sustained by its universal recognition of one God and by its allegiance to one common Revelation—such is the goal towards which humanity, impelled by the unifying forces of life, is moving."[8]

And can such a goal, we ask, be attained except by uniting to follow God's revealed Plan?

8—Idem, p. 204.

The sixth article in a symposium on the subject of The World Outlook.

PRAYER

PEARLE U. EASTERBROOK

SOMEBODY prayed! Somebody acted! Following prayer and action there are interesting achievements. In a city of some hundred thousand a group of followers of Bahá'u'lláh felt the time had come to open a Bahá'í room for study, and for a central place for believers and interested seekers to gather. There seemed to be no place available. After much search and many disappointments, the Spiritual Assembly met to pray: "if it be Bahá'u'lláh's will that a room be found." The room was located and the necessary conditions met.

After a few meetings, to the deep regret of those responsible, it was discovered that noisy street cars passing the building in which the room was located, made it almost impossible to have public lectures. Again somebody prayed! To the deep gratitude of the Bahá'í Community the city council suddenly decided to remove the street cars from that street and change their course entirely.

Prayer and action go hand in hand. "All things of the world arise through man and are manifest in him, through whom they find life and development; and man is dependent for his spiritual existence upon the sun of the Word of God," says Bahá'u'lláh.

Note the definite chain of association upon which all achievement depends. All things of the world arise through man and upon him they depend for development. Man is dependent upon God. Then if we be consistent, how can we expect to carry any project without the help of God? In fact how can we expect to live abundantly, or even live at all without God? Imagine any river refusing to accept refreshing streams that rush to feed it from the mountain tops! Yet we find man persistently refusing the profound refreshment that God continuously sends him, ofttimes called the "river of life." Perhaps if the science of prayer were taught us just as, and at the same time, that we are taught to walk and talk, we would pray as naturally as we do these other things.

Could we not find many synonyms for the word "prayer?" Do the following words denote and connote the same thing to you: prayer, petition, meditation, realization, worship, adoration, gratitude? Or, as you think them over, do there seem to be such differences that we are tempted to wonder if there are different types of prayer? It must follow, if there be different types of prayer there must be different objectives which would help us define the types.

Prayer has been roughly defined as

communion with God. "He should commune with God, and with all his soul persevere in the quest of his Beloved," says Bahá'u'lláh, justifying that definition.

When man has once caught the fact of answered prayer, he will turn to prayer as he now turns to human agency for help. There are as many reasons for praying as there are reasons for any undertaking in life. Indeed, lying within the crystal chalice of prayer are all the answers to any need of man. If one doubts this, he needs must study carefully the prayers revealed by Bahá'u'lláh. He will find prayers for healing, prayers for protection, prayers for unity, for the departed, for forgiveness, for teaching, for praise, for material needs, for illumination and guidance.

Some few years ago the writer had been praying ardently for months to her Episcopalian God for understanding—understanding of life, of God, of His relation to His creation, and passionately for proof that behind prayer was Reality. Walking along the snowy street of a northern city her attention was called to a small, but very interesting building, into the door of which several people were passing. Feeling an irresistible impulse to know what was behind those doors she slipped in, to find herself in a Catholic grotto, illumined only with candles.

Slipping into a seat near the back, she watched devout souls come and go for an hour. Finally, with a hungry yearning to know God through prayer, as those faithful ones seemed to know Him, she arose to leave, when her eye fell upon a glassed-in case covering an end wall. Inclosed in that case were written testimonies of answered prayers from people in all walks of life. For two years after that, if faith in prayer wavered, the writer visited this little French grotto.

'Abdu'l-Bahá says, "The sign of the intellect is contemplation, and the sign of contemplation is silence," for man cannot both speak and meditate at once. Are we not here encouraged by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to meditate? Surely meditation is one form of prayer. Joan of Arc slipped into the village church to listen—not to speak. While we meditate, we are speaking with our own spirit, one puts questions to one's spirit and is answered, "the light breaks forth and Reality is revealed."

Again 'Abdu'l-Bahá says, "You cannot apply the name 'man' to any being devoid of the faculty of meditation." Those who have had the privilege of gathering together to pray and meditate, gladly testify to the increased ease, as well as to the results, of such gathering together. Indeed "The spirit of man is itself informed and strengthened during meditation; through it affairs of which man knew nothing are unfolded before his view. Through this faculty man enters into the very Kingdom of God."

What a privilege man is now offered by the Word of God, Bahá'u'lláh: the privilege of being trained in the science and efficacy of prayer; the privilege of praying the prayers given to the world to be used for such definite and clearly defined purposes! Was there ever greater need for prayer? With all the world confused,

rapidly moving toward destruction, and so alarmingly indifferent toward the vital issues of the day, can we not do our bit? Those whom God has blessed with understanding could unite now in a definite, practical program of meditative prayer that perchance we may not fail to do our part toward maintaining the balance for constructive Good? Prayer can do more to prepare men's hearts for the accepting of God's Cause than any other one agency.

Listen to the words of Bahá'u'lláh as He describes our privilege to partake of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit: "O my servants! The one true God is My witness! This most great, this fathomless and surging ocean is near, astonishingly near, unto you. Behold it is closer to you than your life-vein! Swift as the twinkling of an eye ye can, if ye but wish it, partake of this imperishable favor, this God-given grace, this incorruptible gift, this most potent and unspeakably glorious bounty."

Then in closing may we read together Bahá'u'lláh's offer to the lowliest—the privilege of a service so far-reaching that the mind of man can in no wise measure? "Whoso reciteth, in the privacy of his chamber, the verses revealed by God, the scattering angels of the Almighty shall scatter abroad the fragrance of the words uttered by his mouth and shall cause the heart of every righteous man to throb."

Speed ye forth from the horizon of power, in the name of your Lord, the Unconstrained, and announce unto His servants, with wisdom and eloquence, the tidings of this Cause, whose splendor hath been shed upon the world of being. Beware lest anything withhold you from observing the things prescribed unto you by the Pen of Glory, as it moved over His Tablet with sovereign majesty and might. Great is the blessedness of him that hath hearkened to its shrill voice, as it was raised, through the power of truth, before all who are in heaven and all who are on earth. . . . O people of Bahá! The river that is Life indeed hath flowed for your sakes. Quaff ye in My name, despite them that have disbelieved in God, the Lord of Revelation. We have made you to be the hands of Our Cause. Render ye victorious this Wronged One, Who hath been sore-tried in the hands of the workers of iniquity. He, verily, will aid every one that aideth Him, and will remember every one that remembereth Him.—BAHÁ'U'LLÁH.

ISLAM

ALI-KULI KHAN

VIII.

IN 628 A.D., which was the sixth year since the Prophet and the Refugees had worshipped at the Holy House of Mecca, they showed great anxiety to revisit those scenes and once more perform the pilgrimage of the Ka'ba. The Prophet, more than the rest, shared these feelings.

The Prophet had a vision in the night wherein He dreamed that He entered Mecca and visited the Holy Temple. He decided to fulfill His vision. The Moslems thought that should they at this time approach the Ka'ba in the peaceful garb of pilgrims, Koreish would be bound by every pledge of national faith to leave them unmolested, and should they oppose their entrance, the pilgrim band would be strong enough to remain safe, if not gain victory over them. Thus a body of Moslems was organized, but few amongst the tribesmen joined them on the alleged plea that their occupations or their families prevented them from leaving.

In February 628 A.D., Muhammad and His followers set out for Medina. Koreish, hearing of this, opposed their advance with a body of 200 horses under Khalid and Ikrima. Hearing of their approach, Muhammad left the road and encamped at Al-Hodeibiya, an open space on the verge of the sacred territory about Mecca. As there was no water near at hand, the Prophet performed the miracle by taking an arrow from His quiver and planting it in an hitherto empty well. Then water in abundance became available.

Negotiation began between Koreish and Muhammad in the course of which the Koreish were struck by a deep sense of the reverence and devotion of the Moslems toward their Prophet. Orwa, a tribal chief, seeing that Muhammad and his men had come as pilgrims, threatened his erstwhile friends, the Koreish, to retire with his Arabs if the Koreish would not permit the Moslems to make the pilgrimage.

To negotiate with Koreish, Muhammad sent Othman. He was told that he would be permitted to visit the Ka'ba; but as for Muhammad, they had sworn that this year he should not enter their city. Othman declined the offer and retired with their message to the camp.

Anxiety and alarm spread in the camp. Muhammad called the Moslems to take a solemn oath that in case of Koreish's harming Othman, they would all join and stand by his absent son-in-law (i.e. Othman). Their fears were relieved by the reap-

pearance of Othman. But the pledge, having been made under a tree, goes by the name "The Pledge of the Tree." To this pledge Muhammad often referred as one which had caused a new solidarity amongst the Moslems.

A treaty was made between Muhammad and Koreish stipulating that Muhammad should retire that year without entering the city. In the coming year Muhammad and His followers might visit Mecca for three days, during which Koreish should retire and leave the city to them. But the Moslems should not enter it with any weapons.

Though unable to enter Mecca, Muhammad sacrificed the victims and performed as many rites as were permitted, including the shaving of His head. Then He and his followers retired to Medina.

Though this was a disappointment, the treaty had offered the opportunity to return next year, and for this reason in the Qur'an it is styled a victory. For this was the first time when, without fighting, peace was restored, and truly in the two years that followed, more people entered the Faith than ever before.

One of the first effects of the treaty was that the Beni-Khoza'a tribe finally entered into alliance with Muhammad.

The latter pilgrimage was the last event of importance in the sixth year of Muhammad's residence at Medina. Excepting the Jews and Christians, it made of the Moslems the only faith that was recognized throughout the Peninsula. As for the Jews and Christians who would not join Islam, they paid the tribute. The Prophet now thought of extending His mission to Egypt, Abyssinia and Syria nay, even to the Roman and Persian Empires. The Roman Empire, wearied by shocks of barbarous invasion, was now target to a devastating war with Persia. The Christian church had been divided into schisms, the Melchites and the Jacobites, the Monothelites and the Nestorians, each regarding the other with deadly hatred and ready to welcome any outsider who would rid them of their adversaries.

The new Faith, although opposed to their superstitions, recognized their original Revelations. Faith in the One God would replace Mariolatry and bring regeneration. At such a time, Muhammad determined to send embassies to the Emperor and to the Persian Chosroes, to Abyssinia, Egypt, Syria, and Al-Yemama.

Hearing that foreign kings would not accept an epistle without being sealed, Muhammad had one made of silver, and engraved in the words, "Muhammad the Apostle of God." On the opening of the new year, six messengers with six letters were dispatched, the messengers being travelers, merchants, or others who had visited the respective countries.

A.H. 7 (A.D. 627)

Since the assumption by Muhammad of the prophetic office, the Roman and Persian kingdoms had been in deadly warfare. Until 621 A.D. the Persians achieved success, overrunning Syria, Egypt and Asia Minor, and even threatening Constantinople itself. This at last awoke Heraclius

from his inglorious lethargy, and at the time of Muhammad's Hegira, he was driving the Persians back into Asia Minor. Soon after, he carried the campaign into the heart of Persia. During those three years of the Emperor's success, Muhammad was engaged in His seemingly doubtful struggle with Koreish. Heraclius broke the forces of Persia and compelled Chosroes to flee from his capital. Early in the following year the latter was murdered by his son Siroes, who ascended the throne and made peace with Heraclius.

In fulfilment of his vow for the success which had crowned his arms, Heraclius performed on foot the pilgrimage from Edessa to Jerusalem, where the "True Cross" recovered from the Persians was solemnly restored to the Holy Sepulchre. This was in 628 A.D. and 7 A.H.

At a time like this, an "uncouth" dispatch in the Arabic character was laid before Heraclius. It was from "Muhammad the Apostle of God," with a rude impression of whose seal the epistle was ended. In it Heraclius was summoned to acknowledge the mission of Muhammad and cast aside the idolatrous worship of Jesus and His mother and return to faith in the One God. The epistle, perhaps, was set aside by the Emperor as the effusion of a fanatic. But in a few short years the Emperor was to realize his mistake.

The said dispatch reached Heraclius through Al Harith VII, the Ghassanid Prince of Syria which was part of the Roman Empire. Though no notice was taken by the Emperor of the message from this "Obscure Pretender," yet the world knows how soon he grasped the Holy City and surrounding lands which Heraclius had wrested from the Persians with such great difficulty.

Some months after his accession, Siroes, the Persian King, received a dispatch from Muhammad. Without reading it, the proud king tore the letter to pieces. When Muhammad heard of this, He prayed and said: "Even thus, O Lord, rend Thou his kingdom from him!"

The Roman governor of Egypt, Mukaukis, received Muhammad's letter with courtesy. He forwarded valuable gifts to the Prophet which were accepted.

The Court of Abyssinia stood in a peculiar friendly relation to Muhammad. To the Abyssinian prince, He addressed two letters. One announced His prophetic mission and invited the prince to accept Islam. The other contained a request that his fifty or sixty followers who were still in exile in Abyssinia be sent home to Medina. The prince, in reply, accepted Islam and also carried out the Prophet's wishes relative to the exiles.

The sixth message was sent to Haudha, chief of Beni Hanifa, a Christian tribe, in El-Yemama. A courteous answer in praise of Islam was returned, with, however, a show of vainglory. It was that he, being a part of his tribe, requested Muhammad for a share in His rule of Arabia as a condition to accepting Islam. The Prophet told his followers that "had that man asked even for an unripe date, he would have been refused. Let him perish, and his vainglory with him."

Thus cursed, Haudha died in the following year.

In August A. D. 628, when the Prophet was sixty years of age, he equipped an expedition against the Jewish settlement of Kheibar. The army which marched from Medina was 1600 strong. It was in A. H. VII.

A number of strong fortresses studded the rocky heights of the fertile valley of Kheibar. These fell one by one. The Moslems then advanced against the strong fortress of Al-Kamus. The Jews, led by their chief Kin'ana, took position before the citadel and resolved on a desperate struggle. Ali advanced with the battle cry, "I am he whom my Mother named the Lion." This was in reply to the champion Marhab who had challenged Ali with these words: "I am Marhab, as all Kheibar knoweth, a warrior bristling with arms when the war fiercely burneth."

Ali, in this battle, showed great feats of prowess. He conquered his opponent, the enemy were defeated; the Jews losing 93 to the Moslems 19 —the only ones killed.

The citadel of Al-Kamus surrendered and the Jews were permitted to go free; but Kin'ana was put to death.

Zeinab, sister of the warrior Marhab, who was amongst the women who had joined the Moslems, found the opportunity to revenge her brother's death. She dressed a kid with dainty garnishings, and placed it with fair words before Muhammad at the evening's repart. But she had steeped it in poison. Muhammad received the dish graciously, and having taken the shoulder, he distributed the rest to Abu Bakr and one called Bishr. But having swallowed the first mouthful, He cried, "Hold. The shoulder has been poisoned." Bishr, who had eaten most, at once changed color and died soon after. Muhammad was seized with excruciating pain and had himself and others with him freely cupped between the shoulders. The effect of the poison was felt by the Prophet until his dying day; tradition strongly believes that the poison proved the main cause of his death.

The fortresses surrendered one by one, but among those spared from being sacked was Fadak.

On their way back to Medina, the Moslems laid seige to Wadi al Kara, which after two days surrendered upon like conditions. The lands were left in possession of Jewish farmers, subject to rules which governed the public lands. Namely, surrendering half the produce.

In the autumn of the same year, Muhammad welcomed the Abyssinian exiles.

(*To be continued*)

EDUCATION FOR CHARACTER

HORACE HOLLEY

FROM the perspective of a later generation it is more than possible that progress in education will be regarded as the supreme achievement of our day. For by education is meant not only extension of knowledge, organization of instruction, or increase in school equipment, but a broadening of the basis of human life itself, and an enlargement of the world of consciousness in which man's spirit dwells.

This major importance laid on education, particularly in its influence on character, becomes clear if we survey some of the steps by which education has advanced in modern civilization.

The first stage was taken in the development of the university in Europe —the stage marking the aristocratic or exclusive period in the possession of knowledge. That feudal educational system, based on theology but including the few other learned professions, established a true culture but one restricted as the privilege of the few. The attorney and the physician received professional instruction, but the essential characteristic of that education was its production of a culture of aristocracy. Incidentally, it was an education maintained for men alone.

The rise of science and industry shattered that feudal aristocracy and extended the realm of education to the middle classes. The motive of knowledge became increasingly secular, and technical instruction became increasingly important to the performance of work in manufacturing and commercial fields. While the technics of the agricultural era could be acquired within the family, the technics of industry required the facilities of school and college. Civilization witnessed the significant step represented by the adoption of compulsory public education under the secular state.

Meanwhile, the area of knowledge rapidly developed. The modern university evolved, with its many departments of specialized instruction, with the result that in our time the factor of specialization has produced men and women educated along such diverse lines that the vital element of understanding has been grievously impaired. Today there is all too little mutual comprehension of the values of life by educated men and women. Education has become not only departmented but divided, as the nations are divided, by fixed boundaries across which communication and intercourse are maintained under artificial difficulties. We may say with truth that the progress of factual knowledge has been accomplished at the sacrifice of that spiritual culture

which represents the vital unifying force of civilization.

Therefore, as the schools increase, the problems of society have multiplied even more rapidly. Factual knowledge, and professional instruction alone, are obviously inadequate for the needs of civilization. The realm of values is today symbolized not by the beacon light of guidance but the battlefield of strife and confusion.

A later generation may be able to analyze our tragic dilemma with sympathetic understanding. The man of 1975 may be able to look back at our time and say that this confusion was inevitable. "For hundreds of years," he may remark, "the influences of the outer world were so powerful as to depress the inner spirit of the race. The age of physical discovery and the settling of a great new continent in America, followed as it was by such strides in scientific discovery and industrial development, emphasized only one side of man's being—the side of reason and personal will. Children grew up in a world filled with great factories and enormous business buildings which temporarily overawed their spiritual capacity. Everything pulled from without—all influences tended to concentrate human powers upon the attainment of education for personal success. Meanwhile, the rise of international problems augmented the stress of existence in an unbalanced civilization. No wonder that for a while education missed the straight and narrow way of spiritual experience, and the fruits of character could not ripen in an age whose inner lights flickered so feebly amid the storm and stress of world adjustment."

Such might be the comment of a later and serener age upon our turmoil. But ours is the responsibility to achieve a path from this present wilderness into an age of light and peace.

What marks the entrance to that path? The focusing of our powers of understanding, I am convinced, upon the last and greatest mystery—man himself. The pursuit of factual knowledge has become subordinate to the realization of human possibility and discipline for the performance of collective undertakings. The time has come to perceive that character development is the keystone of the educational process. Without that keystone, the structure of an elaborate civilization crumbles before our eyes. We must be educated—we must educate ourselves — primarily to become true human beings, and only secondarily to acquire proficiency for the daily task. This stern necessity of a crucial time can only be fulfilled if we replace the attitude of materialism by a spiritual conviction. That is, we are called upon to give less emphasis to the possible advantages of action performed upon the outside world, and more emphasis to the motives for action within ourselves. The individual is required to arise above dependence upon impaired public standards of success, and face the fact that his most important achievement is himself.

From this larger point of view, the field of education may be divided into successive levels, each distinct, but all mutually inter-dependent.

The first level is that of the fundamental virtues, honesty, integrity, self-discipline—those formative impulses of life which mark the education of the child.

The second level is that of human association—the social virtues characterized by the capacity to cooperate with others, to achieve social personality, without fear and repression on the one hand, or aggressiveness and exploitation on the other. Unless the foundation of integrity is laid in childhood, this necessary social personality can never be acquired.

The third level is represented by preparation for one's life work, the selection of that profession or trade which is to offer not only the means of livelihood but also the fulcrum by which the individual can alone exert his measure of influence upon society and render his degree of usefulness to the world.

The fourth level is that of citizenship, or training for the maintenance of civilization, the level of our responsibility to the organized life of mankind. This quality of citizenship is not a matter of political action or capacity alone, but in its full sense stands for loyalty to the triumph of righteousness upon earth. It is the extension of integrity from personality to the institutions which are the pillars of the social order. A decisive factor in the confusions of our time consists in the lack of people who have matured to the point of becoming *civilized* men and women.

This level of citizenship requires the world outlook today. The problems of civilization have become world problems, and only a world solution is possible. Therefore the good citizen is he who can realize his common humanity with people of other races, classes, nations and creeds, and understand that this common humanity will one day predominate over those provincial prejudices which arose during ages of physical separation between the five continents of earth.

The fifth level is that of spiritual experience and faith—a conscious relationship to the creator of the universe and man, a consecration to that purpose of existence which embraces the life of eternity and not this physical life alone. The spiritual life is a quickening of the soul itself—that potential capacity to know and love God. Here is the fruit and the aim of human life, the motivating impulse which establishes truth and validity upon all lower levels of action and experience. "The root of all knowledge," Bahá'u'lláh has said, "is the knowledge of God, and this is impossible of attainment save through His Manifestation."

Therefore, we turn to the subject of education once more, and realize that the greatest of all Educators are those Prophets who have lighted the beacon of guidance in the darkness of our earthly life. The Prophets have educated and trained the souls of men in the principles of integrity, justice, mercy, prayer and human unity.

They have supplied the impulse to true civilization and unfolded the mysteries of character attainment through sacrifice of lower to higher self. On the level of Their truth we can perceive the workings of a divine destiny in the history of mankind.

An address delivered over Station WGN, Chicago, February 11, 1939.

THE GOAL OF SPIRITUAL BIRTH

MABLE E. HUNE

MAN'S intellect has brought into the realm of consciousness many, many facts concerning this limitless universe of ours. He breaks the laws of nature by soaring in the air, traveling in the depths of the sea, sending his voice with the speed of light around the world. But has man been able to solve the mysteries of life and death? Can he combine certain constituent elements so as to form a living being? When we consider the immensity and intricacies of our universe we must acknowledge that it has necessarily an all wise Creator, a real motivating Power. It is that unknowable Force which we call God.

When man considers the question of what comes after this life he very often turns away from the question in fear, for we naturally fear that which we do not know.

But let us face the question and see just what we do know. We find in the world of nature that nothing is ever lost. The form of the mineral is changed when absorbed by the plant. The plant's form is changed when adding to the growth of the animal. When the atom enters into the composition of the plant, it dies to the mineral kingdom, when consumed by the animal it dies to the vegetable kingdom, and so on until its transmutation into the kingdom of man, but throughout its transversing it is subject to transformation and not annihilation. But this is not obliteration. Death is only a relative term, implying change. This is a rational proof that man is eternal.

At death man's physical body disintegrates and returns to its original elements, but that part of man which was created by God in His own image, man's individuality, his rational soul—what of that? Since nothing in the material universe is destroyed, is it not logical that the intangible reality of man is eternal also?

As the child in the matrix of the mother does not comprehend the nature of the world into which he will be born, so we know nothing of the kingdom to which we will progress. In the beginning of his human life man is embryonic in the world of the matrix. There he receives capacities and endowment for the reality of human existence. In this world he needs ears, he needs eyes; he obtains them potentially there in preparation for his new existence.

In the same way, in this existence we must prepare ourselves for the life beyond this. That which we need there must be obtained here. The indispensable forces of the divine existence must be potentially attained in this world.

Unlike our growth in the matrix of the mother, which was entirely without our volition, our preparation for the world to come must be by conscious exercise of the will on our part. Man was created to function here through free will. God cannot compel the soul to become spiritual. The exercise of the human will is necessary. We must seek "to be born again." If we fail to make this preparatory growth here our spirits will be non-existent in the life beyond.

Since it is incumbent upon us to provide for our needed growth and development here how can we know how to proceed? Down through the ages God has sent His prophets to be man's educators, who, by exhibiting in their lives a perfect example, show us the way to know and serve God, and so attain to everlasting life.

Spirituality is the possession of a good, pure heart. When the heart is pure the Spirit enters and our growth is natural and assured. Then we know that we are in the heavenly kingdom. The kingdom of heaven is within our own souls. We must *will* to know God and develop according to our capacities. When man achieves the spiritual goal of spiritual birth he becomes a perfect channel through which God reaches down to help man.

We are taught that man retains his individuality in the other world and begins there where he leaves off here and that progress there is endless. All that we develop here that is noble and worthy we take with us. It is not permitted that we know the nature of the future life but we are told that if we knew the joys in store for us we would welcome death to release us from this life. A story is told of a Persian youth who, after reading a tablet on the Spiritual World, killed himself in his desire to leave this world and enter upon the happiness of the next condition.

Let us seek to find the way to life everlasting. There is no death except of our own making. "A man must lose his life to find it."

Verily I say! No one hath apprehended the root of this Cause. It is incumbent upon every one, in this day, to perceive with the eye of God, and to hearken with His ear. Whoso beholdeth Me with an eye besides Mine own will never be able to know Me. None among the Manifestations of old, except to a prescribed degree, hath ever completely apprehended the nature of this Revelation. . . . I testify before God to the greatness, the inconceivable greatness of this Revelation. Again and again have We, in most of Our Tablets, borne witness to this truth, that mankind may be roused from its heedlessness. . . . How great is the Cause, how staggering the weight of its Message!—BAHÁ'U'LLÁH.

THE ONENESS OF RELIGION

DORIS McKAY

IV.

THERE IS BUT ONE GOD

According to the Qur'ánic story of Abraham this happened: "What," said Abraham to the Chaldeans, "are these images to which ye are so entirely devoted?"

The Chaldeans, answering as man does even today when his faith is challenged, answered, "*We found our fathers worshipping them.*"

"Verily," said Abraham, "both you and your fathers have been in manifest error. . . Verily, your Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth: it is He Who hath created them, and I am one of those who bear witness thereof. . . By God," declared the youth, "I will surely devise a plot against your idols . . . after ye shall have turned your backs!"

Archeologists have commented on the whiteness of the moonlight on the site of the ancient city of Ur. The shrines of the Moon-god Nannar, and the Moon-goddess Nin-Gal were in the heart of that city occupying a large place. They say that the Moon-gods were surrounded by the images, in human form, of the countless minor gods of their retinue. "He went into the temple," said Muhammad, "where the idols stood, and he broke them all in pieces except the biggest of them that they might lay the blame on that."

When Abraham was accused before the assembly, he said, "*Ask them,* if they can speak."

"Verily, thou knowest," protested the Chaldeans, "that these speak not."

"Do ye therefore worship, besides God, that which cannot profit ye at all, neither can it hurt you? Fie upon you" cried Abraham, "and upon that which ye worship besides God:"[1]

The presence of the one true God haunts the Old Testament. The story in Exodus tells us that Jehovah had given Moses "two tables of testimony, tables of stone written with the finger of God." The first of the laws that He had revealed for the Isrealites had been this: "You shall have no gods but Me. You shall not carve any idols for yourselves the shape of anything in heaven or above or on the earth below or in the sea. You shall not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the Eternal, your God, am a jealous God. . ."

But when Moses, hastened by Jehovah, descended the mountain with the tablets written on both sides in his hands, what did he hear? There was such an outcry that Joshua (who attended Moses) thought there was war in the camp. But Moses recognized the answering cries of ritual! it was a chorus of men's voices singing;

1—Sura XXI, Sale's translation.

when he came near enough to see the camp he saw the people dancing around the image of a golden calf.

Moses, fresh from the presence of the Ancient of Days upon the mountain, with His awful admonitions ringing in his ears above the din of the idolatry, threw down the precious tablets, breaking them, and hurled himself upon the image of the calf. The legend says that he both melted it and ground it to powder. He put the powder into water and made the idolators drink it down. Then standing at the entrance to the camp he shouted in his leader's voice: "Who is for the Eternal? Come over to me. . ."

Is it for us to quibble over the details and historic authenticity of these tales of the one true God? We are not historians: rather are we tracing a trend in religious thought, a concept. There was a tendency to fetish worship and idolatry which was a pull back to man's primitive past, a pull away from evolution. Inspired Leaders arose with a God-given wisdom, a God-power, whose mission it was to combat the retrogressive tendency. According to the literature of all religions, Hindu, Buddhist, Zoroastrian, Christian, Muhammadan, the prophets dominated men while they could, spoke of reward and punishment, led them onward in accordance with a destiny, called their souls back from primordial slime. There was a creative social Principle at work, a coordinative Center set up like a Sun. Man's sin then (as now) was to turn away from that Center.

The effect of the teachings and influence of the Hebraic sequence of prophets and administrators was that when Jesus came He did not have to spend His precious months of teaching on the breaking up of the worship of actual graven images. Unique among the peoples of that time the Hebrews were not idolators. Jesus was free to attack through His teachings a more subtle infidelity to the one true God. He threw the money-changers out of the temple; He searched the hearts for the hidden altar to Baal; He distinguished between the quick and the dead—family could be an idol, possessions and power, old ways of living, individualism. Those things from which man could not unrivet his gaze when the Christ-call sounded were the idols. Because of those happenings, mysteriously hinted at in the ancient manuscripts which comprise the Old Testament, there were ready in the time of Christ a few, a nucleus, who were ready to cast away the Christ-defined idolatry and to carry the new tablets of the one God (those writ on the heart) out into the border territory. Many listened. Then, all too soon, as the years passed into centuries the apostolic channels became clogged with doctrine, and the subtle idols (self in its guises) crept back into their niches.

"And Jehovah said unto Moses. Hew Me two tablets of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon the tables the words that were on the first tablets that thou breakest."

Again God was merciful. He sent Another, and Another, and Another. He made new covenants. He revealed through new versions of the Mother Book, new vistas leading to the

Promised Land—that Land which is called the Kingdom of God.

Suddenly, dramatically, in the seventh century after the appearance of the Christ in Palestine, the one true God established Himself in an out-territory, among the tribes of Arabia.

Arabia was then—and promised ever to be—a veritable stronghold of idol worship in its crudest form. The Ishmaelites (so-named from their belief in a descent from Abraham through Ishmael) had fallen early into those mistakes which the Israelites had made. Centuries of recession had piled one upon another. The dust of the desert itself was not equal to the gloomy dust of superstition that stifled the souls of those people. The story of the coming of Muhammad is Hebraic in its masterful splendor and abruptness. With words that cut like knives Muhammad managed to carve the consciousness of the one God into those resistant minds. We find ourselves incredibly transplanted to the earlier legend. It was as if Jehovah, Himself, the Eternal, after finding His chosen ones bereft of hearing in the Hour of Christ had turned back His attention upon the earlier and more primitive line.

In 629 Muhammad came back to the Temple of Abraham and Ishmael, this time a conqueror of such power that He had but to appear before the gates of Mecca for that city to capitulate. Of all the populace He killed but four and these were executed in just punishment for their misdeeds. But Muhammad was bent upon the destruction of another community, that of the gods in the temple of His forefathers. Followed by His ten thousand soldiers He came to the Kaaba. Had the gods there possessed a mind or soul instead of being the inanimate things that they were, they would have known the spelling of their ultimate doom nearly twenty years before. It was at that time that the angelic Voice on Mt. Hira had said to Muhammad, "Cry in the Name of thy Lord!" In the years that had followed Muhammad had declared His mission, suffered His period of persecution, had fled (in 622) out of Mecca at night and on His black horse to the City of Yathrib—soon to be called Medina, the City of the Prophet. He had then set up a temporal rule in Medina and administered the Law of God. Always He had taught the one God: "Your God is one God; there is no God but He, the Most Merciful. In the creation of the heaven and the earth, and the alternation of the day and night, and in the ship which saileth on the sea laden with what is profitable to mankind; and in the rain-water which God sendeth from heaven, quickening again the dead earth and the animals of all sorts which cover its surface; and in the change of the winds and the clouds balanced between heaven and earth — are signs to people of understanding. Yet, some men take idols beside God and love them with the love due to God."[2]

Now the Meccans had treacherously broken their years of truce and the climax for the gods was no longer to be withheld.

There in the Kaaba the gods waited, Hobal, carved in red agate,

2—Sura II.

the gold and silver gazelles, the images of Abraham and Ishmael. Ranged around these were three hundred sixty idols, one for each day of the lunar year, nature fetishes. As in His story of His ancestor Abraham, He struck the idols down—and this is a matter of record: while an idolatrous populace sighed He broke every one of the images, and with each crashing blow He shouted: "Truth is come, and falsehood is fled away. Verily, falsehood is evanescent!" With the images went every pagan rite. It was a deathblow to a whole vast system of idolatry. From the desert the tribes began giving themselves up to Him; enlisting under the banner of the one God.

THE DOCTRINE OF "DIVINE UNITY"

The demolition of the images was a deed performed in the world of material things. It was a vigorous lesson in the root doctrine of Muhammad's teachings: that of the "Divine Unity." Readers of this series will recognize a recurrence of our theme in the following statement by a present-day adherent of the Prophet.[3]

"For thousands, for millions of years, there has been but one truth in the world. God, the Incomprehensible, the Unrecognizable, has sent it to mankind. Throughout the entire existence of the world, through all peoples and all cultures, through all times and all countries, there has been a steady procession of prophets, of holy ones, commanded by God to preach the primitive truth to humanity. . . . Their message was the same at all times. Faith in the prophets is the cornerstone of Islam."

Another Muhammadan writer[4] carries the conception of unity farther: "God is one and so are His creatures. Unity springs from a belief in the Oneness of the Creator which spreads out and inspires everything in creation."

The doctrine of Divine Unity can be resolved into precepts which are basic also in the Teachings of the Báb and Bahá'u'llah, 1. The Unity of the Essence, 2. The belief in a succession of prophets, 3. The essential brotherhood of mankind. A more searching definition of polytheism was in the making. The belief in the actual incarnation of the God-essence in the person of the Prophet had crept out of Egypt and Greece and Rome into Christianity. Muhammad protested against an idolizing of Jesus and Mary. He guarded His followers against a deifying of Himself. For to consider the prophets other than channels for the knowledge of God, to differentiate between them, worshiping one while rejecting others was to expose one's lack of comprehension of the true implications of Unity. It was defined as polytheism then: so is it now.

In our own day, Bahá'u'lláh, latest manifestation of the one true God, bears witness to His own dissociation, as a personality, with the Unknowable Essence: "Know thou of a certainty that the Unseen can in no wise incarnate His Essence and reveal it unto men. He is, and hath ever been, immensely exalted beyond all that can either be recounted or perceived. From His retreat of Glory His voice is ever proclaiming: '*Verily I am God, there is none other God besides*

3—Muhammad, Essad Bey, 1936.

4—Muhammad, the Prophet, Sindar Ali Shah.

Me, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise'." But God moves Him entirely, as an instrument in His Hand: "As a token of His mercy . . . and as a proof of His loving kindness, He hath manifested unto men the Day Stars of His divine guidance, the Symbols of His divine unity, and hath ordained the knowledge of these sanctified beings to be identical with the knowledge of His own Self. Whoso recognizeth them hath recognized God. Whoso hearkeneth to their call, hath hearkened to the Voice of God, and whoso testifieth to the truth of their Revelation, hath testified to the truth of God Himself." Explaining the Divine Unity again He says: "Inasmuch as these Birds of the celestial Throne are all sent down from the heaven of the Will of God, and as they all arise to proclaim His irresistible Faith, they, therefore, are regarded as one soul and the same person. For they all drink from the one Cup of the love of God, and all partake of the fruit of the same Tree of Oneness."

"All is from God," therefore all humanity: "Through each and everyone of the verses which the Pen of the Most High hath revealed, the doors of love and unity hath been unlocked and flung open to the face of men. We have erewhile declared—and Our Word is the truth—: 'Consort with the followers of all religions in a spirit of friendliness and fellowship.'" "O contending peoples and kindreds of the earth! Set your faces toward unity, and let the radiance of its light shine upon you. . . . There can be no doubt whatever that the peoples of the world, of whatever race or religion, derive their inspiration from one heavenly Source, and are the subjects of one God. . ."

The one God recognized, we are ready to attack, with His help, the inner idolatry which is so firmly set up in the hearts of a forgetful world. "Arise, O people," the Voice of the One God has called again in ringing tones, "and by the power of God's might, resolve to gain the victory over your own selves, that haply the whole world may be freed from the gods of its idle fancies—gods that have inflicted such loss upon, and are responsible for the misery of, their wretched worshipers. These idols form the obstacle that impeded man in his efforts to advance in the path of perfection. We cherish the hope that the Hand of Divine Power lend its assistance to mankind, and deliver it from its state of grievous abasement."

THE SONG CELESTIAL

Book Review

WILLARD McKAY

"THE SONG CELESTIAL" was published by Howard Colby Ives in the latter part of 1938. It is a valuable addition to that literature which is concerned with values and concepts which are spiritual in origin and practical in application.

The impressive quality of Mr. Ives' verse is found in the subject matter. His poetical exposition of profound truth is frank and straight-forward. It relies on something far beyond fanciful embellishments of phrase and rhythm. The reader finds no new words or usages struck off in the mint of poetic imagination. The language is conversational and plain, somewhat suggestive of that of the medieval mystics and saints, whose poetry says directly what it has to say, whose easy rhyme and elastic meter impose no obstacle to the free statement of what the speaker wished to express.

The most formal poetical expression in the whole "Song" is found in the three quintrains that make up the prelude.

"'Tis not from sages, nor from learned books
That man gains wisdom. In his secret breast
A Chamber lies wherein he sometimes looks
And listens. There his troubled soul finds rest,
And there, if he adores, his life is blest.
The gloomy dust which rises from men's minds,
In their eternal search for certainty,
Obscures the spirit's vision, and so blinds
The eye of heart that, failing Truth to see,
They grope and wander in perplexity.
But sometimes — Ah, that blessed, unwarned hour!
The dust is scattered by a mystic breeze:
Upon man's heated mind there falls a shower
From Fount Celestial, and his heart finds ease
Which only God can give — Such hours are these."

The thoughtful reader will realize that these stanzas reflect spiritual experience. If he hopes to read on and know the details of this experience he can undoubtedly proceed to a fulfillment of his wishes.

The remaining sixty pages present a conversation between man, inquiring, and God, informing, divided into three "Hours" of meditation. The first line "Why dost Thou hide Thyself from me, O God?" asks a question which millions have echoed.

"It is not I who hide, 'tis thou art blind." is the first of forty-two lines which answer man's yearning for real knowledge. If these lines are read thoughtfully, with meditation, with desire for illumination, the reader can find therein whatever is necessary for contact with the Source of all power.

"There lies but one soul-step 'twixt thee and Me:
Take that one step into Eternity.
That Life is now if thou that step wilt take . . ."

This is a promise. All that is required is to desire the step more than the things that prevent it.

The limitations of the human mind, which fails to detect That which surrounds it and penetrates it, are suggested by

"The whale by seeking cannot find the sea;
The eagle, soaring high
Against My blue-domed sky,
Finds not the air, nor can thy mind find me . . ."

These limitations, prejudices, superstitions, fears, can be outgrown. For instance, man's greatest fear of the ages becomes dissolved before God's light of reason.

"O Son of Man! Death have I made for thee
As tidings glad: at its approach why flee? . . .
Look thou with keenly penetrating eye:
Canst thou in all My Universe descry
A trace of death? 'Tis change thou seest here,
A change which leadeth but to life again:
Death is a superstition born of fear."

The human race, in its present state of maturity, is able to lay aside superstition and seek knowledge. True knowledge has now been revealed, says the poet.

"In this great Day things hidden are revealed.
What hath been whispered in the closet now
Is shouted from the housetops. Naught concealed
Lies buried, for My Revelations flow
A thundering torrent."

The details of these Revelations are the theme of the poem.

Man cries aloud, deploring his inadequacy to receive the divine teachings. "O God! The spacious picture is too vast." God reassures him and tells of the prophets who can inspire and lead him.

God warns man, however, that if he finds such a guide it may be difficult to recognize Him or to follow His guidance.

". . . If Him you find
He may not be at all unto your mind . . .
Wouldst thou, then, that He is thy Guide be sure?
And wouldst thou recognize His Glory then?
And if thou didst it may be He might ask
Of thee some difficult, some mighty task.
He might renunciation ask of thee . . .
For when My Messengers to any age
Bring My new Law, They cancel every page
Writ by the past except the page of Love . . .
They speak not as the scribes with learned lore . . .
As blind lead blind. They speak

not as men speak . . .
'What go men out to see when they'd behold
A Prophet?' was the question asked of old:
'A reed by breezes shaken?'
Aye, a Reed —
An empty Reed, and shaken by the Breeze
Of My new Revelation. Such are these,
The Guides of men, They speak My Word, indeed . . .
To every age My Prophets speak of Me;
To every cycle give what men can bear.
My Trumpets They who call men to be free . . ."

Man shuns the implications of this challenging proclamation. Will the reader avoid them, or has he an eager mind, alive and searching for truth? Will the reader accept the challenge? In the poem man does what man has generally done in the past. He avoids responsibility by substituting for spiritual reality a mere intellectual curiosity concerning the nature of his destiny. He asks:

". . . Pray tell
Me of this mystery of heaven and hell!"

The answer evades nothing and is as modern and scientific as eternity:

"Know this, My son, thy Heaven is My Meeting
And separation from Me, Hell . . ."

The fulfillment of Christ's promise expressed by John is now suggested:

"To all My world I call: This is a Day
The light of which beyond the noonday sun
Is sanctified. It is the Day foretold . . .
My Messenger hath come with healing wings
And sword of Justice . . .
This is the Day for which My dear Son prayed . . ."

Man reminds God:

"And yet they basely hanged Him on the Rood!"

God explains:

". . . because My lovely Face
They did not see in His: yet, Lo! the Place
Whereon they hanged Him now is holy ground,
And men now worship Him they crowned
With thorns . . ."

Then God proclaims:

"I am the Lord of Hosts! My hosts indeed
Are those who from human ties are freed, . . .
These walk above the world by My Great Name . . .
Their very names are lost in My Great Name . . .
Such are My Hosts . . .
Who can resist them whom My Power endues!"

Man (and with him the reader) responds to this challenging invitation. It is wholesome and natural for man to devote himself to a great Cause and to make sacrifices for some supreme ideal. He has confidence in the truth which has come to him in the Chamber which lies "in his secret breast." God's inspiring summons wins man's assent.

"Now all my questions, asked and unasked, flee
Before Thy Mighty Word.
O, may I be
Enrolled with these, Thy chosen

ones? May I
Be privileged to die, unknown, for Thee:
Or, self-forgetting, be allowed to live
And all my dedicated powers give . . ."

God assures man of the satisfaction of his highest aspirations:

"When Man calls unto Me with heart sincere
As thine, Lo! I become the very ear
With which he heareth My assured reply.
Unto thy eager knock
My Love all doors unlock."

Lest the reader should think Mr. Ives presumptuous in putting words into the mouth of a God of his own creating, we must explain that every statement imputed to God in "The Song Celestial" is paraphrased from the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, the great Persian statesman, educator, reformer, saint, poet and religious leader whose creative utterance inspires a determination to take that "one soul-step" and to work for the establishment of the new World Order. The tremendous influence of Bahá'u'lláh on the spiritual and practical life of the world is just beginning to be appreciated by the western civilization. Doubtless we fail utterly to realize our obligation to this, the most outstanding character of the present millennium. Universal is the scope of His wisdom, which spoke from backward Iran eighty years ago and enunciated the principles of social progress which are now accepted as the progressive policy of enlightened social-minded leaders. Clear seeing is the direct knowledge which could and did formulate the practical details for a world-embracing plan of international cooperation. Surpassing is the magnetic power to win men's loyalty to Himself, to His teachings, to the plan, to men's own highest ideals. In short, the complete versatility of the genius of this Personage does, in the opinion of some millions of courageous thinkers, justify them in ascribing to Bahá'u'lláh the rank of the Prophet of our own day.

The reader who is interested in examining contemporary thought may find in "The Song Celestial" a simple and clear paraphrase of that which in the original is expressed in gorgeous oriental imagery, as in the Kitab-i-Iqan (Book of Certitude) and in the "Hidden Words" of Bahá'u'lláh. Mr. Ives has done his work well. The quotations offered in this review are but a minute portion of the wealth comprised in the "Song."

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